

VZCZCXRO3519
PP RUEHLMC
DE RUEHLP #0729 0761737
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 171737Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8465
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 5690
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2957
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 6839
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4069
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1390
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1308
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 3640
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4032
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8551
RHMFSS/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 000729

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/17/2016

TAGS: ECON PGOV PREL BL

SUBJECT: LANDLESS MOVEMENT TRIED TO STRONG ARM GOB

Classified By: Amb. David N. Greenlee for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) The Landless Movement (Movimiento Sin Tierra or MST in Spanish) used dynamite to take control of the Justice Ministry for several hours on the afternoon of March 13, seeking the release of its members jailed for the June 2004 lynching of Ayo Ayo Mayor Benjamin Altamirano (see human rights report) and the 2003 murder of Miguel Dupleich, among others. After its attempts to pressure the GOB by blocking the highway between Oruro and La Paz failed, the MST turned to more drastic, direct measures with the Justice Ministry. The Ministry's Director of Indigenous Affairs, Miriam Campos, told us on March 15 that she and Justice Minister Casimira Rodriguez negotiated with MST leaders for several hours. In the end, the Morales government refused to release the defendants, but did promise them a fair trial and legal representation in the form of public defenders. As a result of the standoff, Minister Rodriguez canceled her planned trip to Venezuela; we have not heard any reports of injuries associated with the takeover.

¶2. (C) Comment: To the GOB's credit, it didn't cave in to the MST's strong arm tactics, which would have set a dangerous precedent for an organization which in many rural areas, already operates above the law. End comment.

GREENLEE